

Pragmatic Discourse Markers: A Comparison between Natives and Non-natives and Textbook Evaluation

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Abstract

Pragmatic competence is one essential component of communicative competence; however, it has been quite neglected until recent years. Among all, the knowledge and ability to use discourse markers (DMs) cannot be overemphasized because they often facilitate cross-cultural communications. Due to the culture-bound nature, DMs (e.g., “*well*”, “*y’know*”) are often used quite differently across cultures. To help the EFL (English as Foreign Language) learners master discourse markers, discrepancies between natives and non-natives must be revealed first. However, few studies have investigated how non-native learners differed from native speakers, not to speak of the deviations under the influence of power and distance, reported to be decisive factors in the uses of DMs. Therefore, the present study aims to examine how natives and non-natives use DMs when the social roles changed. In addition, the uses of DMs from Far East English Readers were examined to study some possible influence of textbooks on non-native learners. The subjects included 6 English as Foreign Language (EFL) college freshmen and 6 English as native language speakers (ENSs). Role play was used to gather the data from the native and non-native speakers. The results revealed that “*well*”, “*y’know*” and “*so*” are the most commonly used DMs by both the ENSs and the EFL learners. Power and distance relationship among the interlocutors were revealed as not so much a factor in determining these markers’ occurrences than the nature of requests, the functions of these markers in discourse or the responses from the addressees. A lack of DMs found from the textbooks could be a source of students’ inadequate DM ability. Some pedagogical activities are suggested.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Pragmatic competence (i.e., “social use of language in different contexts”) can refer to as obvious as some lexicalized politeness phenomenon to as trivial as pragmatic DMs (Trillo, 2002, p. 771). Pragmatic DMs though do not carry much propositional meanings like the “connective uses of conjunctions” (i.e. *so, but, because*) or “interjections” (i.e. *oh, well, you know*), they do function to lubricate a conversation and maintain a given social relationship (Stubbe, M. and Holmes, J, 1995; Tyler and Bro,1992).

Trivial though it seems to be, pragmatic DMs i.e. *well, you know, so* have proved itself to be a formidable task for L2 learners to master if without teachers’ intentional attempt to teach them the differences between the DM uses in different culture (Trillo, 2002, p. 770). Trillo (2002) argues that to research on and teach these pragmatic markers purposefully is a must because non-native learners often develop their grammatical ability away from their pragmatic one. For learners, the subtle pragmatic differences in different cultural contexts can even be difficult for learners who have high grammatical ability. In addition, Trillo (2002) maintains these DMs have often been neglected by teachers and textbooks alike. In his study, the results indicate that non-native learners do have pragmatic fossilizations on these pragmatic DMs like *you know* and *well* when not adequately taught these markers (can also seen in Tyler, 1992).

Similarly, in our EFL contexts here in Taiwan, students also have long neglected the importance of pragmatic competence let alone the component, pragmatic DMs in it. As indicated above, grammatical ability, the core in our school instruction is not conducive to one’s pragmatic competence and the lack of authentic contexts here in Taiwan further prevents our students from acquiring the functions of DMs correctly. In this case, if without research into how native and non-native speakers use these DMs and incorporate the differences into our instruction, how can our learners overcome this pragmatic learning obstacle?

However, several recent studies on DMs have mostly focused on their functions with little attention being paid to the influence of power or distance, the social relationship between interlocutors on learners’ DM uses which has been indicated as an important factor in the use of DMs (Fuller, 2003; Andersen, et al., 1999; Stubbe, M. and Holmes, J. ,1995).

And among all the sociopragmatic studies, to the best of my knowledge, literally none can be found that focuses on how native English and non-native EFL Taiwanese students use pragmatic DMs when the addressees’ roles change. In addition, to examine the sources of our learners use of DMs, I also try to find previous

studies on textbook evaluation on this; however, none has been found. Therefore, the present study investigates how English native speakers (ENS) and non-native learning English as foreign language learners (EFL) differ in their uses of DMs in different social roles in the speech act of request and examines how our textbooks address these pragmatic DMs. The choice of requests was due to the importance of them and the common occurrence of them in our daily spoken data (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Upadhyay, 2003).

The main objective was to examine the differences of pragmatic DMs between EFL and ENS in requests and some possible sources of it. Three sub-objectives were (1) How do ENS differ from EFL in their most frequent use of DMs in their requests in terms of power and distance? (2) What other factors affect these markers' occurrences in requests? (3) How do our high school textbooks address this issue and why?

2. Literature Review

Pragmatic discourse markers (DMs)

Many studies have started to focus on DMs lately. Though DMs carry little or no propositional meanings sometimes, they are acknowledged as contributing to the coherence of a discourse and connect the given utterance to the immediate context (Schiffrin, 1987; Tyler and Bro, 1992; Muller, 2004). Relevant to this view, Flowerdrew and Tauroza (1995) point out the transitional role of DMs in contexts. They argue that DMs prepare listeners for changes in the direction of ideas (p. 450).” They further explain that the transitional role can be observed from how the DMs help students relate new events to old or already absorbed ones. Fuller (2003, p. 205) attests to this remark by claiming that DMs help interlocutors create common grounds. In addition to the coherence-building, and transitional role of DMs, Stubbe and Holmes (1995, p. 64) claim that DMs can even help “lubricate” and “maintain” social relationships. Trivial though they seem to be, the use of them can indeed enhance the overall comprehensibility of one’s speech to the ear of those native speakers. Tyler and Bro (1992) in their study argue that when Chinese learners use DMs, their speech will be more easily understood by their American counterparts.

In addition to the functions of DMs mentioned above, some definitions of DMs will be given below to clarify the type of DM we will examine in our study, the pragmatic DMs (Redecker, 1990).

Redecker (1990) proposes “ideational discourse markers” and “pragmatic discourse markers.” Here, his “ideational discourse markers” mainly refer to the

semantic function of discourse markers which suggest inter-clausal relationships by temporal sequence, elaboration, cause and effect. The prime cases can be represented by *so* and *because*. Ex: It's raining now, so the picnic will be cancelled. / The picnic will be cancelled because it's raining now.

In contrast, his “pragmatic discourse markers” refer to those that indicate not logical semantic relationships but beliefs and intentions underlying those adjacent propositions and are bleached in their semantic meanings. They include functions of evidence, justification, and conclusion. Elements in this type include interjections like *well* and *you know* and sometimes some ideational DMs like *because* and *so* will overlap their function with this type and be included as well. In the latter case, an example of *so* is given below.

Ex: situation: a college student is making a request to a professor for sitting in a class.

So, can I be put on a wait list. (ENS)

Here, instead of being an inter-clausal connector indicating ‘cause and effect,’ ‘so’ is used as a ‘summarizing’ or ‘concluding’ device, the pragmatic function of it. Moreover, different types of pragmatic DMs can occur together in a sentence.

Ex: situation: a college student tries to borrow a computer from his roommate.
Well, you know, you'll be really be doing me a great favor.

Trillo (2002) points out the neglect on pragmatic DMs by previous studies and textbooks which have often emphasize more on the ideational DMs. However, Trillo (2002) maintains that without intentionally teaching these pragmatic DMs, our learners will still find them a formidable task to conquer due to the disconnection between one's grammatical acquisition and pragmatic one and a lack of authentic environment for our students to pick up these pragmatic DMs naturally and thus they become the objective in our present study.

Andersen, et al. (1999) points out two characteristics which can help us distinguish what exactly is a pragmatic DM. First, they are semantically-empty. Second, their removal from the original context will not affect the grammaticality. Andersen, et al. (1999, p. 1340) gives us an example of *well* and *now* here: “*Well, now*, tomorrow, you can finish this up.” They argue that by being used as a pragmatic DM, *well* and *now* are used as semantically empty elements and their removal from the context will not affect the grammaticality of the speech.

Pragmatic DMs and addressees' listening comprehension

In terms of DMs and L2 students' listening comprehension, while Chaudron and Richards (1986) and Dunkel and Dvairs (1994) claim pragmatic DMs play little role in the hearers' listening comprehension (cite in Flowerdrew and Tauroza ,1995), Flowerdrew and Tauroza (1995) refute their findings by suggesting some methodological problems. Unlike previous scripted text, Flowerdrew and Tauroza (1995) apply authentic lectures. Moreover, they conduct a study to observe how DMs affect EFL Hong Kongese students' listening comprehension of lectures. The findings show that DMs do affect EFL students' comprehension.

In addition to the positive roles played by DMs in naturally-occurring spoken data for the L2 listeners' listening comprehension, an adequate use of them can also make the speech of EFL learners more easily comprehended by native speakers (Tyler and Bro,1992) and thus enhance the quality of the cross-cultural communication. Tyler and Bro (1992) claim that Chinese EFL learners' speech can be better understood by their American counterparts when they used pragmatic DMs. This means, DMs can help both natives and non-natives understand one another better in communication and thus decrease the chances of communication breakdowns in cross-cultural interactions.

The variation of DMs with different addresses

Andersen, et al. (1999) suggest that previous research has paid little attention as to how social variables like power and distance between interlocutors can affect one's use of DMs. They argue that pragmatic DMs do connote meanings of another level, namely, the social or pragmatic relations to the context or to the addressees involved (can also see in Stubbe and Holmes, 1995). Andersen et al. (1999, p.1340) claim that "in order to show their knowledge or to manipulate social relationships," children even as young as five years old will vary their DMs. In terms of *well*, they argue that children often use it to address people in relative lower status.

In addition, *well* is found to be used among intimates or equals more in some other studies. Jucker and Smith (cite in Fuller, 2003, p.26) adopt interview and conversation to examine the pragmatic DMs from L1 native English speakers. They argue that more presentation markers like *well* is used more among friends with equal status. In addition, Redeker (1990) concludes that pragmatic DMs like *well* is used more among friends with equal status and small distance than strangers in film-describing activity. Similarly, Fuller (2003, p.23) adopts interview and conversation to observe how pragmatic DMs are used by L1 speakers. *Well* is found to be used more among intimates with low distance with each other.

In terms of *y'know*, Stubbe and Holmes (1995) examine how *y'know*, *eh* and

other exasperating expressions are used in New Zealand English by way of interview and conversation. They conclude that *y'know* is often used by speakers with lower social class as a “solidarity marker” to gain implicit understandings from the hearer. Likewise, Huspek (1989) examines the speech of American industrial workers on their use of *you know* and concludes that it is often addressed by those workers to people of higher social status as an indicator of mitigation. On the contrary, Fuller (2003, p.23) disagrees this by arguing *you know* is more universally applied to hearers of all kinds of social status.

Pragmatic DMs: *well, y'know and so*

Schiffrin (1985) argues that pragmatic DMs acquire their meanings from contexts; therefore, it is important for one to observe them in real spoken data instead of written one. In terms of *well*, Schiffrin (1987, p. 126) maintains that *well* is used between propositions not coherent with each other (can also see in Fuller, 2003, p. 23; Schiffrin, 1985, p. 662). Jucker (1993) echoes this point by claiming *well* is used when “the previous context may not be the most relevant one for the interpretation of the next utterance.”

The use of *well* can be determined by the role of the speaker (i.e., a presenter or a listener) in a given context. Schiffrin (1987, p.103) argues that *well* is a reception marker. Similarly, Fuller (2003, p. 23) concludes from her study that markers like *well* serves more as a response marker by the evidence that speakers (i.e., the interviewee) often uses less *well* while the listeners (i.e. the interviewer) uses more *well* in the interview context. In contrast, Jucker and Smith (cite in Fuller, 2003, p.26) categorizes *well* as a kind of presentation marker which means when one plays the role of a speaker, he/she will use more *well*.

In terms of the functions of *well*, Jucker (1993) uses the relevance theory to analyze authentic data of *well* and categorizes it by four functions, namely, as a marker of insufficiency, as a frame, as a delayed device, or as a face-threat mitigator.

As mentioned above, while in most cases *well* is used as a response marker which suggests the forthcoming incoherent talk (Schiffrin , 1993), in some cases, it serves both as a response and a presentation marker. Requests is exactly the situation where *well* can be used this way (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 120). Here are several subtypes of *well* prefacing requests that both give and seek responses at the same time. First, *well* prefacing requests for clarification or elaboration. Second, it precedes a subsequent request to the question failed to be answered in some previous attempts. Third, it is followed by a different discourse topic and thus is used as a topic shift indicator. Forth, *well* is used before the subsequent attempt to get back to the original theme of talk. Fifth, *well* prefacing confirmations derived from previous talk.

And finally, *well* often precedes requests when the other respondent has indicated “reluctance to comply” (Schiffrin, p. 121) in the previous talk.

In terms of *y’know*, Schiffrin (1987, p. 295) claims that *You know* is both an “informational,” “presentational” and “interactional” indicator for subsequent talk. As an information-to-be-conveyed indicator, its use suggests “transitions in information state” in communication (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 267) and designates the speaker as the information provider. It has two meanings concerning the information: “ (1) information X is available to the recipient(s) of talk, (2) information X is generally available.” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 267). Fuller (2003) supports this view by arguing that *y’know* is used to enhance common grounds.

Schiffrin (1987) claims that regardless of the information state of the hearer, that is, no matter the hearer possesses the information intended to be conveyed by the speaker at that moment, the ultimate goal of using *you know* is to create a shared meta-knowledge between the speaker and the hearer about certain topic or issue. It is often used to preface “explanatory clauses” or some other elements, all of which are information to be conveyed to ensure that the hearer has the “background information” and then presents some follow-up talk. Subsequently, the following talk is less direct and can be more comprehensible (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 274) or receptive to the hearer. In other words, it reduces the impact of face-threat of speech by prefacing some explanations or one’s foregrounded information. Huspek (1989) also adds that the use of *y’know* is mostly related to its referential or mitigating function. In addition to convey information, *you know* can also be used to solicit the addressees’ “confirmation” or agreement of a proposition and even to persuade the hearer to “relinquish the floor” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 295).

In terms of *so*, Schiffrin (1987, p. 223) argues when used pragmatically, *so* is often used to bring a closure to a talk which is already apparent due to previous talk and thus suggests possibilities for a new topic in the subsequent talk. This new topic indicates chances for the other respondent to participate in and therefore, *so* suggests a transition in participant role. She also argues that its transitional role can be observed from its preceding turns of talk which gives back the say to the other respondent. To sum up, *so* when used pragmatically, is used to readjust the responsibility between the speaker and the hearer in a conversation by its transitional role. These transitions can be accomplished by the closure of an old topic indicating the emergent of a new topic for the respondent to participate in or the return of the floor to the other respondent. All of these aim to achieve some conversational goal.

Methodology

Participants:

The EFL group contains 6 male college freshmen who have passed the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) mid level oral test, the standard stipulated by the Ministry of Education for high school graduates. This criterion used here is for the goal to examine how well these students can use pragmatic DMs and how this finding can relate to their high school textbook content. The comparison group are 6 male native speakers of English.

Materials:

Role play situation is designed to gather our corpus in order to control the variables, like power and distance in different combinations which can not be easily obtained by natural occurring data like conversations or observation method (Li, 1989).

A role-play sheet with 6 situations of requests containing different combination of power and distance between interlocutors is designed along with 3 intervening situations like apology, invitation, and compliment. These six request situations are designed in terms of whether the hearer is higher, equal, or lower in power and distant or close to the speaker. They are all common college campus situations (Appendix D).

Procedures:

All the participants in the ENS and the EFL groups were randomly paired up with another member in their group to role play the nine situations individually. After a month, the original hearer and the speaker reversed their roles and were paired up with another member to role play again.

Data analysis:

Only the speakers' corpora were coded to see the role of DMs in request-making. Three graduate school students picked out the most frequent pragmatic DMs according to the criterion mentioned above. They solved their disagreements through discussions. *So, well,* and *y'know* were selected for their high frequency, their relevance to request making and the extensive study on them by previous research. The researcher then analyzed their occurrences in terms of power and distance and the discourse context. Then she analyzed the occurrences of these markers in the six volumes of textbooks of the Far East English Readers for High Schools, the one studied by all these participants in their high schools.

Result and Discussion

Table 1 to 6 can help answer our question one "How do ENS differ from EFL in their most frequent use of DMs in their requests in terms of power and distance?"

In terms of *so* by power, table 1 showed that both EFL and ENS participants used

them equally well with the same amount of total and similar distribution. By distance, table 2 revealed that while ENS participants used equal amount of *so* to strangers and intimates alike, EFL speakers tended to use more of them to stranger though the difference is not quite significant. These two tables though informative, do not show too much differences between ENS and EFL speakers in their uses of *so* in making a request to people of different power and distance over them.

Table 1 The frequency of *so* in six situations by EFL and ENS by power

ENS				EFL			
+P	=P	-P	total	+P	=P	-P	total
2	0	3	5	1	1	3	5

Table 2 The frequency of *so* in six situations by EFL and ENS by distance

ENS			EFL		
+D	-D	total	+D	-D	total
3	2	5	1	4	5

*P: power/ D: distance

** P and D refer to the power and distance of the hearer to the speaker.

In terms of *well*, table3 and 4 showed us a much dramatic difference between ENS and EFL speakers. While ENS participants often used *well* to modify their requests, EFL students seemed not to be aware of this strategy. For the ENS participants, they used *well* mostly to intimates or people lower in status/power. This corresponds to some assertions mentioned earlier that *well* is a DM for close friends (Fuller, 2003, p.23; Redeker, 1990) and subordinates (Andersen et al.,1999). Nevertheless, *well* is not found to be used among equals in this study contradictory to some previous claims (Fuller, 2003, p.23; Redeker, 1990). Also, the strategy of *well* in requests seems to be unknown by the EFL students with intermediate level of English.

Table 3 The frequency of *well* in six situations by EFL and ENS by power

ENS				EFL			
+P	=P	-P	total	+P	=P	-P	total
2	0	6	8	1	0	0	1

Table 4 The frequency of *well* in six situations by EFL and ENS by distance

ENS			EFL		
+D	-D	total	+D	-D	total
2	6	8	1	0	1

In terms of *y'know*, the data on table 5 and 6 revealed the differences between ENS and EFL students by the total number. While ENS seemed to use it quite frequently, this appeared to be an unknown strategy to EFL students. For ENS, *y'know* seemed to be used more to hearers of lower social status than to their equals or superiors. This however, is contradictory to previous assertions that *y'know* is used as a mitigating device to be addressed to hearers of higher social status (Huspek,1989; Stubbe and Holmes,1995).

Table 5 The frequency of *y'know* in six situations by EFL and ENS by power

ENS				EFL			
+P	=P	-P	total	+P	=P	-P	total
2	0	4	6	0	1	0	1

Table 6 The frequency of *y'know* in six situations by EFL and ENS by distance

ENS			EFL		
+D	-D	total	+D	-D	total
3	3	6	0	1	1

So, well, and *y'know* are all considered either mitigating lexical/phrasal modifiers or request supportive moves in my study (Blum-Kulka, 1989). When power and distance is increased on the addressees' part, it is assumed that more of them will be used to make our requests less direct and thus more polite, that is, we assume these pragmatic DMs to be positively correlated with power and distance. This, however, is not the case as indicated above. This suggests some other more important factors affect the uses of these markers.

To answer this question, also my second research question, I tried to analyze them qualitatively. In my search, I found the uses of *y'know*, *well*, and *so* were more related to the nature of requests and sometimes, the hearers' responses in the discourse than power or distance. In terms of *well*, 7 out of 8 uses by the ENS occurred after the respondent showed signs of non-compliance in my corpora. Here are the examples:

Situation 1: Borrowing a computer

R: I just keep writing. I get like a block you know. I just can't....

S: *Well*, you know what? My computer is kind of dead. It's got sort of virus out there. So I'm wondering if you're done, maybe I can borrow it?

Situation 2 : Borrowing a computer

S: Would you like to help me out a little bit?

R: I'm kind of busy with my homework now.

S: **Well**, actually, I won't take up too much of your time. I'll just borrow your computer for a minute or so.

Situation 3: Asking for the professor's permission to sit in a class

R: Well, you know the class is full. I don't have too much room. I don't have any more rooms for students.

S: **Well**, I really need this class to graduate, you know. Is there any possible way so that I can do this?

These situations are the major types of *well* used in request-making found from our ENS corpora. In situation 1, the respondent was talking about his being occupied with the computer doing his homework. Though he did not indicate any trace of non-compliance of request in previous talk, he did convey a message that he was *using* the computer and thus this computer was probably not available. In the second situation, though the speaker had not made his intended request yet, borrowing a computer in the first utterance, the respondent immediately showed a sense of non-cooperation of whatever would be requested in the subsequent moves. Thus, a sense of non-compliance was also indicated here. In the third situation, the respondent has *clearly* rejected the respondent's previous request. Immediately after it, *well* is used to initiate another round of request-making. These 3 major types or 7 uses of *well* in our data all related to the respondent's conveying a sense of non-compliance (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 121). Following them, *well* was used to mitigate the impact of face-threat involved in requests and to resume another attempt of request. However, *well* can also be used to initiate a turn though we could only find one entry in our ENS data. Here in the situation of making a request to borrow a computer, it is assumed to be related to its mitigating function as well.

Situation 4: Borrowing a computer

S: Hi, Tom. **Well**, my computer just got a virus..So, can I use your computer to print out?

In contrast, there was only 1 case of *well* used by EFL students. Though it was also related to mitigation due to the nature of request (Schiffrin, 1987), it was used slightly different from the ENS'. An example is given here:

Situation 5: Asking the professor for sitting in a class

S: *Well*, when can I get your permission?

The professor had not given any firm response; thus, the speaker used *well* to mitigate his confirmation deriving from the previous request (Schiffrin, 1987, p.122). To sum up, we know *well* in our data is used as an mitigator whose occurrence is affected more by the respondent's reactions/responses than power or distance.

In terms of *y'know*, the ENS also used much more of it when compared with the EFL students. Examples are as follows:

Situation 6: Borrowing a computer

S: Well, *y'know*, you'll be really doing me a favor.

..Do you think you can just kind of spare a few hours for me?

Situation 7: Borrowing a computer

S: So, I'm wondering if you are done, maybe I can borrow it? *You know*, my paper is due tomorrow, too.

Though *y'know* can preface or follow a request, all of them in our data were used to bring some information and even to change the respondents' original stance in order to achieve the speakers' wish, getting the request granted which is similar to Schiffrin's making the respondent "relinquishing the floor"(1987, p. 295). Thus, its occurrences in our corpora were all assumed to be related to its *mitigating* function (Huspek,1989). This mitigating *y'know* is similar to Stubbe and Holmes's (1995) term as a "solidarity marker." Its occurrences in our corpora are assumed to be more related to the nature of requests and the goal to persuade the addressee to accept our request by mitigating it than power or distance.

Unlike *well*, and *y'know*, the use of *so* does not seem to be so relevant to mitigation in our data; instead, it is more related to the nature of a request and always prefaces a request when the speaker desires a response from the hearer. Examples are given here:

Situation 8: Asking a professor for sitting in a class

R: I can't promise you anything. It's actually arranged by the administrative office. I think you could just sit in the class for a week or two and after I find out who is taking the class or who is dropping out anyway.

S: Well, I really need this class. *So* can I be put on a wait list? (ENS)

Situation 9: Asking for sitting in a class

S: Hi, professor Chen. I want to take your course but it is full so I want to go to the class, find a chair to sit down and listen to your class *so* do you agree of that? (EFL)

Situation 10: Asking for borrowing a computer

Well, you know what? My computer is kind of dead. It's got sort of virus out there. *So* I'm wondering if you're done, maybe I can borrow it? (ENS)

Examples 8 to 10 were given by ENS and EFL. *So* in these cases and all other cases were used to elicit responses from the respondent after some lengthy explanations (example 9 and 10) were given or turns were done (example 8). No significant qualitative difference was found between ENS and EFL students on its use. In all these cases in our corpora, it served as a transitional marker by giving back the say to the respondent (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 225) and is used to conclude (Redekker, 1990) the discourse by issuing a request. Its occurrences in requests have more to do with its function of participation transitions and summary than the influence from power and distance in our study.

For our research question 3, regarding textbook evaluation, the instruction from textbooks seems to play a role on our students' low uses of *well* and *y'know*. Out of 29 request situations from all six volumes, no entry was found from *well* or *y'know*. This low occurrence of *well* and *y'know* correspond to our EFL students' low use of them in our data. As for *so*, none was found from our textbooks, either. However, our students seem to be able to use it as well as those of ENS in our data. This could probably be explained by some other intervening factors such students' own exposure to some tutoring material or language programs outside class.

From the findings above, we observe that *well* is often used among incoherent talk while *y'know* is used to persuade others to accept our requests and *so* is used as a transition marker of participation in talk. Why there were so few cases of *so*, *well* and *y'know* in our high school textbooks? On my closer analysis of textbooks, I found some characteristics of the requests in our textbooks which made it hard to brew elements like *well*, *y'know* and *so*. First, the request moves in the textbooks are pretty brief. They are usually given at the middle of a talk so that the readers are often deprived the chances to see the pre-request parts. Without it, the chances to use *so* is decreased for *so* is often used after some explanations or elaborations are done. Second, the responses to a request is mostly "sure" or "no problem" and even if a rejection is given, some alternative ways are often provided so that the speaker will go with peace without arguing any more or making some subsequent requests.

Also, on the part of the speaker, he/she is often content with whatever response is given. Therefore, there is a lack of coherence among turns which is very likely to be the cause of the disappearance of *well* in the textbooks. Third, the textbooks seem to presuppose that the addressees are easy to be persuaded and this can explain why *y'know* is used less. It could also reflect the lack of awareness of the textbook editors to know that *y'know* is a mitigating device in natural spoken data and that is why they use other mitigating devices like conventional indirect request or mitigating modifiers like “please” or “would you mind...” Instead of *y'know*.

Conclusion

The study reveals that *well*, *y'know* and *so* are the most frequently used pragmatic discourse markers used by both ENS and EFL students in our spoken corpora of request by role play. The power and distance relationship among the interlocutors are revealed as not so much a factor in determining these markers' occurrences than the nature of requests, the functions of these markers in discourse or the responses from the addressees. In terms of our evaluation of Far East high school textbooks, we found none of these markers in a total of 29 request situations out of 6 volumes. It is assumed in this paper that this could be the cause of our EFL learners' low uses of these DMs when compared with ENS. Some reasons in regards to the characteristics of the textbooks were given to account for the lack of these DMs in them.

In terms of teaching pedagogy, it is suggested that students can be given chances to observe how native and non-native English speakers use *so*, *well*, and *y'know* in authentic spoken transcripts or material from dialogues from magazines or the internet. They can be asked to highlight the occurrences of these pragmatic DMs and discuss their functions in small groups in terms of their position in the context. Then, teachers can give students some contexts or situations where they can have a role-play and practice using these DMs in contexts with different social relationship among interlocutors. While each group is demonstrating their conversation, the rest of the class need to jot down sentences where they use *so*, *well*, and *y'know*. Then the rest of the class need to report why these markers are used in their peers' role play and name their functions.

In terms of the limitations of the present study, though the findings are quite informative to help us know the gap of pragmatic DMs between spoken data and our current textbooks, it is encouraged here that future studies can include more participants and use more natural occurring data like observation or conversation to compare with the results from the present study.

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Appendix 1

1. This is a modified version of Byon's (2004) questionnaire.
2. The rhetoric has especially been modified in order not to give students any cue as to what kind of speech act they need to make. Specific words like "request", "invitation" "apology" "gratitude" are especially avoided.
3. The distracting situations are in item 3. 6. 9 for speech acts like invitation, apology, and gratitude respectively.
4. The three versions of tasks are all the same except for the version of language in either Chinese, English or both. The version of both is given below.

Oral Discourse Completion Task for non-native English learners

Instructions:

1. You may now browse through all the situations in Chinese and English. See if there is any word you do not know. If there is, please feel free to ask the researcher what it means or how it is pronounced. If there are any other word that you want to use in your answer but you do not know how to say it in English, you can also ask the researcher before the role play begins. Any question to this role play can be asked now.
2. Please pay attention to the **relationship** you have with your interlocutor. **Try your best to imagine how you would respond each situation in real life.**
3. Your interlocutor does not know what you have in mind so please be specific as to what your intention is.
4. You will be given time from one situation to another to prepare but when you start to role-play, you **can not look at** your sheet. The researcher will give you an example.
5. All your responses in the role-play will be recorded but **they will NOT be used** for purposes other than research. Your responses will be of great value to this research.

- 1.現在你可以快速看過所有中文和英文的情境。看看是否有你所不知道或是你不會發音的字。如果有，請和你身邊的研究生反應。若你有想說的字，但你不確定，你也可以在角色扮演前問。現在你有任何和角色扮演有關的問題都可以問。
2. 請注意你和你的夥伴間的**關係**。盡量試著想像在真實情況時，你會如何反應
3. 因為和你角色扮演的夥伴並不知道你在想什麼，所以當你提出任何意見時，請盡量講得明確，使你的夥伴知道你到底要表達什麼。
4. 在情境與情境間，你會有時間來準備每一題。但是當角色扮演開始時，**你不能看紙上的提示**。研究生會示範給你看。
5. 你在角色扮演中所有的反應會被錄下來。但是它們**不會作為**除了研究之外的其它用途。你的答案將對這個研究有很大的助益。

Example situation: [-P, -D]

Speaker:

Your YOUNGER roommate, Tom whom YOU KNOW VERY WELL and has lived with you for two years has had a new hair style. You think it is really suitable for him. Now, what would you say to him?

你和一個比你小的室友，湯姆已經住在一起二年多了，現在，他剛剪了一個新的髮型。你覺得這很適合他。你會向他說些什麼？

Respondent:

You are Tom. You live with an older roommate for two years. You know each other quite well. You've just had your hair cut.

你是湯姆。你和一個比你大的室友已經住了兩年。你們彼此都很熟。你剛才剪了頭髮。

-----Start-----

Situation 1 [+P, +D]

Speaker:

You need to take this course by professor Lin to graduate; however, the course is closed. You need to ask the professor whom you DO NOT KNOW personally, to allow you to take this course. What would you say to him now?

你需要修到林教授所開的這門課才能畢業；然而，這門課已滿了。你必需請這位你不認識的林教授讓你修這門課。你現在會和他怎麼說

Respondent :

You are Professor Lin. A student whom YOU DO NOT KNOW PERSONALLY comes to talk to you now.

你是林教授。有一個你不太熟的學生現在走過來。

Situation 2 [=P,+D]

Speaker:

You are going to visit your friend, who lives in the college dormitory. You are on

campus, but don't know where the dorm is. You are going to ask a student, who is A STRANGER AND is passing by, for the location of the dorm. How will you ask the student?

你將要去拜訪一個住在大學宿舍的朋友。你正在這個大學的校園中，但是你不知道這個宿舍的正確位置。你準備和一位正走過的陌生同學問路。你會和他怎麼說？

Respondent:

You are a student and now you are walking through your campus when suddenly another student whom you DO NOT KNOW comes to you.....

你是一個學生而現在你正走過你的校園。忽然間，有另一個你不認識的學生向你走來...

Situation 3[=P, +D]

Speaker:

You are in charge of recruiting new members for your dancing club. There is a welcome party in your club on this Friday and you want to ask students of your school to come to know more about your club. What would you say to a student WHOM YOU DO NOT KNOW coming to you right now?

你負責為你的社團招募新成員。這個星期五你的社團有迎新 party，你想要把這個消息告訴學校所有的同學，請他們來多多認識你的社團。現在有一個你不認識的同學走過來了，你會和他說什麼？

Respondent:

You are walking through the campus when suddenly you hear something very noisy in front of you with a group of people there. You do not know what happened. A student WHOM YOU DO NOT KNOW comes to you now.....

你正走過校園，忽然間，你聽到有一群人在前面很吵的不知道在做什麼... 有一個你不認識的學生這時向你走來...

Situation 4[-P, +D]

Speaker:

You are a senior and the vice president of a campus club/organization. You need to get the phone number of Mary, another member of the club. You think that a new member(who seems to be a FRESHMAN and whom you DO NOT know personally)sitting next to you may have it. How would you ask?

你是一個校園中某社團的資深副社長。你必需連絡瑪俐(社團中另一個成員)，但你沒有她的電話。你想坐在你身邊的社員(他看起來像是一個大一新生，而且你並不認識他)可能會有她的電話。你會和這個社員怎麼問？

Respondent:

You are a college freshman who is now taking part in a club meeting. A senior club president sitting next to you WHOM YOU DO NOT KNOW wants to talk to you....

你是一個大一吉他社的社員。你的副社長坐在你旁邊(你和他並不熟)，這時，

他轉向你…

Situation 5 [+P, -D]

Speaker:

You are very much interested in sitting in a class taught by Professor Chen. You personally KNOW him very WELL. So you decide to ask his permission to sit in. What would you say to him now?

你很想去看聽陳教授所教授的一門課。你個人和他很熟。你決定去求老師讓你旁聽。你會向這位教授說些什麼?

Respondent:

You are Professor Chen. A student WHOM YOU KNOW VERY WELL comes to you now.....

你是林教授。有一個你很熟的學生現在向你走來…

Situation 6 [=P, +D]

Speaker:

You are in a hurry for your class and you know you will be punished severely if you were late. Suddenly, you bump into a man WHOM YOU DO NOT know and make him drop his books all over the floor. What would you say to him?

你現在急著去上一堂課，而且你知道如果你遲到的話會有很嚴重的後果。突然間，你撞上一個你不認識的陌生人，而且你把他手上的書全都撞到地上。你這時會向他說些什麼?

Respondent:

You are walking on the campus when suddenly a student WHOM YOU DO NOT KNOW knocks all your books off to the ground.....

你正在校園中散步。突然間，有一個你不認識的人把你手上的書都撞到地上…

Situation 7[=P, -D]

Speaker:

You and your best friend, Tom go to a beach together. Now, you arrive at the beach and you find the sun is scorching hot. You forgot to bring your sunscreen lotion while your best friend is applying his now. You turn to your best friend, what would you say to him ?

你和你最好的朋友，湯姆一起去海邊。現在，你們已經到了海邊。你發現海邊的太陽很大。你忘了帶防曬乳而你的好友卻正在擦防曬乳。現在你轉身向你的好友，你會對他說些什麼?

Respondent:

You are Tom. You and your BEST FRIEND go to a beach together. The sun is scorching hot and now you start to apply your sunscreen. Your best friend wants to talk to you now....

你是湯姆。你和你最好的朋友一起去海邊。這時太陽很大而你開始擦帶防曬乳。

你的好朋友轉向你…

Situation 8[-P, -D]

Speaker:

Your roommate, Tom is someone you know PRETTY WELL. Now, you have a computer virus so your computer is out of order but you have a paper due tomorrow. You want to ask him whether you can use his computer tonight. What would you say to him now?

你的室友，湯姆和你很熟。現在，你的電腦中毒因此故障了，但是明天你有一份報告要交。你想要向你室友借電腦在晚上時使用。你現在會對他說些什麼？

Respondent:

You and Tom, your roommate whom you KNOW VERY WELL have lived together for some time. Now, you are typing your homework with your computer and your roommate wants to talk to you.....

你是湯姆。你和的室友湯姆一起住已經有一段時間了。你和他很熟。現在你正在你的電腦上打你的作業。你的室友轉向你…

Situation 9[+P, -D]

Speaker:

Professor Wang WHOM YOU PERSONALLY KNOW VERY WELL just allowed you to sit in his class. This class is really hard to be granted to a freshman like you. Now you meet professor Wang, what would you say to him?

有一位你很熟的王教授剛答應讓你旁聽他的課。這門課是很難有機會給讓像你一樣的大一生來旁聽的。現在你碰到王教授了，你會向她說些什麼？

Respondent:

You are Professor Wang. You have just allowed a freshman student WHOM YOU KNOW VERY WELL to sit in your course. Now, he comes to you.....

你是王教授。你剛答應一個你很熟的大一學生來旁聽你的課。現在，這個學生走向你…
